



**CHARLOTTE COUNTY-PUNTA GORDA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BPAC)
NOVEMBER 16, 2023
Adopted MINUTES**

Minutes of the meeting held in a hybrid format on November 16, 2023, utilizing Microsoft Teams® for virtual participation and in person at the Charlotte County Transit Facility 545 Theresa Boulevard Port Charlotte, Florida

MEMBERS ATTENDING EITHER IN PERSON OR VIRTUALLY

James Wernicke, (Vice Chair) West County Representative
Robert Logan, Mid-County Representative
Laura Rossi, South County Representative
Betty Staugler, Historical/Cultural/Environmental Representative
Philipp Pfäeffli, Bicycle Business Representative
Ben Turner, West County Representative (Virtual)

ADVISORY AND OTHERS ATTENDING EITHER IN PERSON OR VIRTUALLY

D’Juan Harris, MPO Director
Bekie Leslie, MPO (Virtual)
Laks Gurram, MPO
Betty-Ann Sherer, MPO
Ravi Kamarajugadda, Charlotte County Public Works (Virtual)
April Santos, Charlotte County Public Works
Joshua Hudson, Charlotte County Economic Development (Virtual)
Tanya Merkle, FDOT Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinator, District One
Tony Conte, Charlotte County Public Schools
Mike Koenig, Charlotte County Parks & Recreation (Virtual)
Brett Kamm, Kimley-Horn (Virtual)

ABSENT

Wendy Zurstadt, South County Representative (excused)
Pauline Klein, Bicycle Club Representative (excused)

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

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Vice Chair Wernicke called the BPAC Meeting to order at 2:00 P.M.; a quorum was present.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

All recited the pledge of allegiance.

3. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments received.

4. [Election of 2024 Officers](#)

D’Juan Harris chaired the meeting and entertained nominations for BPAC Chair. He also reminded members this will be the last hybrid meeting as 2024 will be full in person meeting.

Bob Logan nominated James Wernicke as BPAC Chair. Betty Staugler seconded the nomination, and James Wernicke was elected unanimously.

D’Juan Harris asked for nominations for BPAC Vice Chair

James Wernicke nominated Laura Rossi as BPAC Vice Chair. Tony Conte seconded the nomination, and Laura Rossi was elected unanimously.

James Wernicke resumed the duties of chair.

5. Chair’s Report

Chair Wernicke welcomed the new Bicycle Business representative Philipp Pfäeffli.

6. Consent Agenda:

A. [Approval of Minutes October 5, 2023](#)

Laura Rossi made a motion to approve the minutes. Bob Logan seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

7. [FDOT Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator Report](#)

Tanya Merkle reminded everyone the deadline for SUN Trails applications is 2:00 p.m. on December 20, 2023.

The new 2024 Florida Design Manual (FDM) is now available online, she highlighted a few design changes made for Bicycle Pedestrian facilities. There was a brief discussion on sloped curb bicycle lanes to encourage cyclists to ride closer to the curb and further from motorists, allowing them to feel safer in the bike lane.

SUN Trails – there are a few SUN trails projects in the process for funding; such as Myakka Forrest to US 41 which is programmed for Design, County Staff is working to revise cost estimates and will submit an application with the updated estimates. There are some projects along the SUN Trail network, which are not funded through this program, they are funded as transportation alternatives. There are discussions with FDOT on whether these facilities could be designed to SUN Trails standards which are 12’ wide and asphalt paths. It was noted there are some gaps in the system and each year they seek to add projects to close these gaps in facilities.

Chair Wernicke discussed some concerns noted not in Charlotte but in Sarasota County- specifically the Ponce De Leon Blvd overpass on I 75 and raised issues with Debris on the overpass. Ms. Merkle noted each overpass may have a different agreement in place for maintaining these facilities, they would have to be looked individually. Although the State may have constructed the overpass, local municipalities usually maintain them.

There was a brief discussion regarding the right lane in front of Sunseekers which is currently closed. Director Harris noted this is a temporary closure, they are modifying the entrance and will place a temporary traffic signal in place.

8. [Sheriffs' Office Report-Public Safety](#)

The Committee reviewed the Sheriff's report; Deputy Miller was unable to attend.

9. [Charlotte County Report](#)

Ravi Kamarajugadda has nothing to report.

Members discussed street signs still down since hurricane Ian, it was noted the County sign shop is focusing on regulatory signs first such as stop signs and address the missing or damaged street signs. He indicated that the Radar Speed Feedback signs are not functional in West County and NB Burnt Store Road.

10. [City of Punta Gorda Report](#)

At this time there was no report, if there are any questions or comments Director Harris will forward them to the City Staff.

Chair Wernicke requested Mitchell Austin provide an update on the route for USBR 15, as it is proposed in the City limits for the next meeting.

11. [FDOT Draft Tentative Five-Year Work Program FY 2025 to FY 2029 \(DTWP\)](#)

FDOT Five-Year Work Program [Video Shown](#)

Director Harris reviewed the phases of the work program and how projects are reviewed and programmed for funding. The work program cycles open in July and end in the September/October depending on the Legislature.

Members were encouraged to review and send any comments to Director Harris for submission to FDOT.

D'Juan Harris presented an interactive PowerPoint highlighting some projects which have been programmed for funding in the Five-Year Work Program:

- I-75 Jones Loop Truck Parking Facility (where the park and ride portion of this project may be eliminated)
- Jones Loop Road and Piper Road Roundabout project and discussions on assignment of project management.
- US 41 Northbound at South Fork Alligator Creek Pedestrian/Wildlife Overpass project (where a SUN Trails funding being sought)
- ADA Ramp from Harborwalk to West Retta Esplanade project.

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It was noted in past meetings the Committee had discussed improvements to the signage on the NS side of the US41 bridge. The directional signage needs to better define the separated pedestrian walkway and bicycle lane.

12. [2050 Socio-Economic \(SE\) Data Development – Final Update](#)

Laks Gurram introduced Brett Kamm of Kimley-Horn who gave a brief update on the SE Data. He enjoyed working with County and MPO staff to develop an accurate data set.

Laks Gurram informed that the final version includes all County developments and will be invaluable in LRTP preparation.

Laks Gurram encouraged committee members to submit comments, questions or feedback so they can be addressed by the consultants.

One member thought it might be good to see the conservation /preservation land taken out of the TAZ blocks, so the map shows just the areas of growth. It was explained that although the land is included in the TAZ block, it is known there is zero development allowed in these areas.

***Tony Conte** a motion to recommend that the MPO Board adopt the 2050 SE Data forecast with adjustments as needed. **Bob Logan** seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.*

13. [2024 FDOT Safety Performance Measures Discussion](#)

Director Harris informed that MPOs are required annually to adopt Safety Performance Measure Targets for tracking progress towards the Statewide/MPO targets for each of the transportation performance measures and meet Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) requirements.

FHWA has established five national Safety Performance Measures which all State Departments of Transportation and MPOs must address. Unlike other performance measures applicable only to the National Highway System (NHS), the Safety Performance Measures apply to all public roads.

The 2024 Safety Performance Measures and target goals are:

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	STATEWIDE TARGET	CC-PG MPO TARGET
Number of Fatalities	0	0
Number of Serious Injuries	0	0
Fatality Rate per 100 million Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)	0	0
Serious Injuries per 100 million Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)	0	0
Total Number of Non-Motorized Fatalities and Serious Injuries	0	0

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The MPO Board last adopted the FDOT's "Vision Zero" targets (goal of no fatalities or injuries) for all five of the Safety Performance Measures at the December 15, 2022, MPO Board Meeting. The MPO has until February 27, 2024, to accept the FDOT targets for 2024 or develop its own targets. MPO Staff recommends the MPO Board support and adopt FDOT's 2024 targets.

The heat map was discussed: [2022 Heat Map of Crashes in Charlotte County – Five Year Crash Data 2018 through 2022](#)

D’Juan Harris noted as we move forward in developing the Safe Streets and Roads for All Comprehensive Safety Action Plan, all roads of concern in Charlotte County will be given a deeper look.

***Tony Conte** made a motion to recommend MPO Board approval of the 2024 Safety Performance Measures and Target Goals. **Laura Rossi** seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.*

14. Citizen Input

There was no citizen’s input.

15. Staff Comments

Laks Gurram noted that the next step in the development of the SE data is the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan. MPO Staff provide more information at our next meeting in March.

D’Juan Harris announced December 5, 2023, is the FDOT Public Hearing on Harbor View Road. It will be held at the Punta Gorda Isles Civic Association from 5:00-6:00 pm. An email and printed materials were circulated. He encouraged members to attend the meeting and provide feedback.

He also shared drone footage taken during an incident on I-75 and explained the impacts on local roads during an incident on the interstate.

D’Juan Harris informed the future Brightline rail extension from Orlando to Tampa and expressed the interest in extending the connection to southwest Florida. The four MPOs in the Southwest Florida region (Collier/Lee County/Charlotte County-Punta Gorda and Sarasota/Manatee) are trying to piggyback onto the effort with Lee County MPO taking the lead in requesting a Feasibility Study for providing service from Tampa to Naples.

Safe Streets and Roads for All Comprehensive Safety Action Plan Kick Off Meeting at the November 29, 2023, Community Traffic Safety Team (CTST) meeting which will be at 2:00 p.m. at the Charlotte Community Foundation, 227 Sullivan Street, Punta Gorda, Florida 33950.

He encouraged members to take a look at the new MPO email signatures as we have a new logo to announce our transition from CCMPO.com to CCPGMPO.gov. Currently our previous addresses are forwarding, please make note of the new address.

16. Member Comments

Ben Turner Apologized for not attending in person and thanked everyone for the great information

Chair Wernicke was interested in adding a new section to the agenda which would provide an ongoing list of active cycling routes, rides and events by the many bicycle clubs and groups throughout the County and City. He felt this would be a great way to keep local government informed of when and where they can expect to see groups of cyclists on the roadways.

He felt this committee should be responsible for identifying and passing on this list. Philipp Pfaeffli agreed to support this idea.

Betty Staugler asked for clarification on what the purpose was for gathering this information, there are so many resources.

James Wernicke responded that this could be an opportunity to make the public aware there would be riders on the road, safety issues, possibly to share routes so people can take a ride like a shared information idea.

Director Harris indicated to forward the information to the MPO Staff for further clarification.

Laks Gurram was unsure if adding this information as an official agenda item would be better than including this as part of comments.

Chair Wernicke felt as the representatives of the bicycle community it's our responsibility to the county to feed this information; we can become a major resource to the County. He noted his cycling group has routes mapped and standing dates they ride.

Director Harris noted that further discussion is required to be considered on the agenda that the MPO can't speak to, but we should talk further. MPO Staff will look into this request.

Laks Gurram thanked Chair Wernicke for his comments in the past and have been valuable to both the MPO and the County

17. Adjournment The BPAC meeting adjourned at 3:41 P.M. (The next scheduled meeting of the BPAC is 2:00 p.m., March 7, 2024 at the Charlotte County Transit Facility 545 Theresa Boulevard Port Charlotte, Florida)

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